

P. 61. *Micropus melanoleucus* from Sumatra is a Pycnotine bird. See Sharpe, Cat. B. vi. p. 64. *Micropus melanoleucus* of Shufeldt is a Swift, more correctly to be called *Cypselus melanoleucus*. Our American friends are responsible for this error, which has been caused by their unwarrantable resuscitation of *Micropus* instead of *Cypselus*.

P. 66. The family Plataleidæ cannot be properly maintained as distinct from the Ibididæ.

XXIV.—Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.

WE have received the following letters addressed to the Editor of 'The Ibis:'—

Northrepps, January, 1889.

SIR,—I am desirous of offering a few remarks on some of the Raptorial birds referred to in the last number of 'The Ibis.'

In the Notes by Mr. Sharpe and Mr. Whitehead on birds collected by the latter gentleman in Northern Borneo, it is remarked, on p. 66, under the head of *Circus spilonotus*, that the series "seems to prove conclusively that the sexes are similar when they are fully adult."

In confirmation of this opinion, I may mention that Mr. F. W. Styan was so good as to show me a specimen from Foochow (one of a series recorded by him in 'The Ibis,' 1887, p. 231), which he assured me was a female by dissection, but which had assumed the grey plumage; a memorandum which I made at the time states that this specimen "was entirely in male plumage, except a slight mottling of brown interspersed with the grey on the back."

At p. 75 of the same paper Mr. Sharpe refers to a remarkable Falcon in the British Museum from the Lawas River as an example of "the dark richly-coloured Peregrine of the Sunda Islands," with reference to which I wish to observe that the Lawas-River specimen is, so far as my experience goes, quite unique; this very abnormally coloured Falcon was described in detail in 'The Ibis' for 1882, p. 303.

To 'The Ibis' for 1888, p. 145, on the authority of Professor

Menzbier, I contributed a note on the identity of *Scops obsoletus* of Cabanis with *Scops brucei* of Hume, and also on the priority of the latter name; I am glad to observe that Mr. Dresser, after an examination of Mr. Hume's specimens, confirms this identification at p. 91 of the present year's volume.

As reference is made at p. 123 of this volume to Mr. E. P. Ramsay's valuable 'Tabular list of Australian Birds,' I may take this opportunity of pointing out that, at p. 36, Mr. Ramsay speaks doubtfully as to the species of *Ninox* inhabiting Norfolk Island, having apparently overlooked the circumstance of two specimens of *Ninox maculata* from that island having been recorded by me in 'The Ibis' for 1885, p. 139.

Yours &c.,

J. H. GURNEY.

64 Hereford Road, Bayswater,
January 21, 1889.

SIR,—With reference to your Note in this month's 'Ibis,' stating that Darwin speaks of having seen Penguins at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata in July, I beg to say that during my recent trip in the 'Golden Fleece' I arrived at Monte Video on July 27th, 1886, and after a sojourn of some days proceeded up the river some 200 miles to Fray Bentos (Uruguay), returning to Monte Video on the 17th August. During this time I never saw a Penguin. But on looking over my diary, I find, under the date of August 18th, the day after we left Monte Video, before we passed Cape Corrientes, an entry "Penguins reported to have been seen."

I was always very careful to make a distinction between what I saw myself and what other people saw for me.

The first time I appear to have seen Penguins on this coast myself was at the mouth of the River Desire, much further south.

Yours &c.,

J. YOUNG.

Meuenden,
January 26, 1889.

SIR,—Regarding your query in the January 'Ibis,' I may

tell you that I possess the head, wing, and leg of a Penguin (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) which was found dead on the sea-shore in the province of Rio Grande do Sul, in the neighbourhood of Rio Grande, by my friend Dr. H. v. Jhering.

Yours &c.,

HANS V. BERLEPSCH.

United States National Museum,
Washington, January 24, 1889.

SIR,—Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, in the last number of 'The Ibis,' has contributed an exceedingly valuable paper on the species of the genus *Platalea*, which I have read with great interest and satisfaction. It was highly gratifying to find the questions which I put in my paper on the Japanese *Herodiones* answered so ably, and to learn that I had been, in the main, correct in my interpretation of *Platalea minor*. It is evident that the excellent material at the command of Mr. Ogilvie-Grant could not have fallen into better hands.

On page 33 Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, after some flattering words in regard to my work, says that his own investigations have on several points resulted in conclusions quite the opposite to those arrived at by me. It seems that one of these points is in regard to the bareness of the face of the young Spoonbills, the other being the question as to the distinctness of *P. leucorodia* and *P. major*. I believe this to be a misunderstanding, for, so far as I can see, our views are not at all opposite. I agree completely with Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, and I think he agrees with me.

It will be seen from what I have said, p. 277, *in fine* (U. S. Nat. Mus. x. 1887), that I regard the immature birds as having the naked space of face and throat more reduced than have the old birds. But in the sentence quoted by Mr. Ogilvie-Grant I do not speak of what I term the immature birds, or the young birds, but of "*the very youngest birds*" as compared with "*the older ones*;" and these, as Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, on the very same page, admits, have "*nearly the whole face and throat naked*." I wrote the sentence in question with special reference to a European specimen before

me, which, as the dimensions given by me on p. 281 show, is hardly more than half-grown (expos. culmen 97 mm.). This bird is out of the "downy" plumage, that is, the feathers are fully grown and their downy tips have been thrown away, but no additional feathers have as yet appeared on the denuded portions of the face and throat. I was therefore undoubtedly correct in my original statement. Now as to the application of it. From Bonaparte's and Schlegel's descriptions of the type of *P. minor* I was naturally led to believe the naked space in this specimen to be larger ("genarum parte plumosa marginem oculorum haud attingente") than in those examined by Swinhoe and by myself; and as the tarsus of the specimen in question was also given as extraordinarily short, the conclusion was logical, that the type was a very young bird like the European specimen just mentioned, though somewhat older on account of the longer bill. From the figure furnished by Dr. Büttikofer (as well as from the original in the 'Fauna Japonica,' which I am now able to consult) it is evident, however, that I was misled, and Mr. Ogilvie-Grant expressly says (p. 55) that there is "considerably less naked skin in it than in more mature birds." So much for the alleged "theory" of mine.

On p. 39 Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, in regard to the distinctness of *P. leucorodia* and *P. major*, says that he is inclined to share Mr. Seebohm's opinion rather than mine. But he certainly does not. Mr. Seebohm's opinion is, or was, when I wrote, as expressed by myself, that "*Platalea major* of Temminck is undoubtedly a young bird" of the European species, while my conclusions were exposed in the following guarded form (p. 278): "I therefore consider myself justified in regarding the Japanese form as separable." Whether "specifically distinct" or not, I have not ventured to say, and on this point I am still somewhat doubtful. But whether specifically or only subspecifically distinct, it is evident from Mr. Ogilvie-Grant's whole treatment of the subject (see pp. 34, 39-47) that he agrees with me that the two forms are separable.

Yours &c.,

LEONHARD STEJNEGER.

Croft House, Holywood, co. Down,
February 23rd, 1889.

SIR,—I wish to record in your pages a recent interesting ornithological occurrence in this country, that of a Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*). The bird was shot near Dundrum, co. Down, on 21st January last, and was sent into Belfast the following day, when I had an opportunity of examining it in the flesh. It measured 4 feet 10 inches from tip to tip of the extended wings. It is an exceedingly handsome bird, the extent of the dark markings on its otherwise snow-white plumage being intermediate between the two figures in Dresser's plate, No. 310. It was started out of a clump of bushes between the rabbit-warren and the sea, and shot as it was sailing slowly away.

Yours &c.,

R. LLOYD PATTERSON.

Kilmory, Lochgilphead,
February 27, 1889.

SIR,—Mr. Harvie-Brown is perfectly correct in saying (above, p. 135) that at p. 492 of your October number there is a misprint. But unfortunately the correction he makes is equally wrong. The name I wrote was "Dr. John MacRury."

Mr. Harvie-Brown ought to know better than to call the "Monack," or Monek Islands, "Monarch." But very likely this is also a misprint?

Yours &c.,

JOHN CAMPBELL-ORDE.

Canary Islands, Tenerife, Puerto Orotava,
February 5th, 1889.

SIR,—It may possibly not be altogether without interest to British ornithologists to know that I was fortunate enough to discover the nest of *Fringilla teydea* during last summer in the south of this island. The nest, which contained two richly green-coloured eggs, was at the top of a *Pinus*

canariensis, on one of its lateral branches. I believe I am the first to find this valuable nest.

Yours &c.,

RAMON GOMEZ.

Blackgame in Newfoundland.—We extract from the 'Field' of Dec. 22nd, 1888, the following account of an attempt made by Mr. R. L. Marc, of St. John's, Newfoundland, to introduce blackgame into his adopted country.

"The first shipment of these birds arrived there from Scotland on October 21, 1886, and a second on December 3 following. In all something like twenty brace were sent, three birds only dying on the passage. They were conveyed by Mr. Marc to a suitable locality, about six miles in from 'the half-way house,' between Holyrood and Salmonier. The second lot were taken to a place a few miles nearer Salmonier. On being liberated they at once took wing, flying vigorously; and the Legislature passed a law to protect the new importation for five years. Since then accounts have been repeatedly received showing that the birds are thriving well and rapidly increasing in numbers. Already they are reported to have been seen in Bay St. George, so that they have actually made their way across the island in that short time. Some have also been seen at Trepassey, on the southern shore of the island.

"Prior to the date above mentioned, if we mistake not, only two species of Grouse were to be met with in Newfoundland, namely, the Willow Grouse (*Lagopus albus*), common in the lowlands, and the Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus rupestris*), an alpine species rarely found below the line of stunted black spruce, except in the depth of winter, when it descends to the lowlands and feeds sometimes in company with the Willow Grouse. Quite exceptionally a few Canada Grouse (*Tetrao canadensis*), locally known as 'spruce partridge,' have been known to find their way over from the mainland, and have now and then been shot; but we are not aware that they have obtained a permanent footing or bred in any part of Newfoundland. The Willow Grouse is by far the

commonest species, and is known locally as the 'ptarmigan,' although that name would be more properly applicable to the Alpine *Lagopus rupestris*."

'*Stray Feathers*.'—We welcome with pleasure the arrival in this country of a new part of 'Stray Feathers' (vol. xi. nos. 1 to 4), containing a lengthy and valuable paper by Mr. Hume himself "On the Birds of Manipur, Sylhet, and Cachar," written in 1881, after his return from Manipur, and dated Dec. 1881. We hope Mr. Hume will not keep us long waiting for the remainder of the "Introduction," which contains a comparison of the avifauna of Sind and Manipur, and promises to be of a very interesting character.

A Pteroptochian from Costa Rica.—Mr. Ridgway writes to us of the discovery in the Volcano of Poas, Costa Rica, of a very remarkable new bird, which will apparently constitute a new genus of Pteroptochidæ. It comes near *Xenicus* in structure, but is very different in coloration. Mr. Ridgway will shortly describe it under the name *Zeledonia*.

Field-Notes on the Yang-tze.—Under this head Mr. F. W. Styan has contributed to the 'Field' a series of interesting observations on the birds and other animals met with during a voyage from Shanghai up the lower Yang-tze to Kiukiang in February and March last year (see 'Field' of Feb. 2nd, 9th, and 16th, 1889). On March 17th an excursion was made from the river-bank at Tunglin to the "Chin Teh hills, a fine range lying a short distance inland," and quarters were established in a temple "beautifully situated amongst groves of bamboos and firs, at an elevation of perhaps 2000 feet above the plain." The birds here met with are described as follows:—

"Birds were well represented here. A pair of Eagles frequented the highest range, and most likely had a nest among the crags. Several Indian Buzzard-Hawks (*Butastur indicus*) arrived one day, evidently on migration. A beautiful little Bare-toed Scops Owl (*Scops elegans*) came every night

and hooted around the temple, till at last, after much patience, I succeeded in getting his form sharply defined against the disk of the full moon, and shot him ; after that I could hear another further down the valley, but it never came near the temple. The bed of the stream was haunted by Violet Whistling Thrushes (*Myiophonus ceruleus*), Dippers (*Cinclus pallasi*), Fork-tails (*Henicurus sinensis* and *Microcincla scouleri*), and Dusky Redstarts (*Ruticilla fuliginosa*), and on the 23rd a number of Grey Wagtails (*M. melanope*) arrived. Around the temple the woods were full of life ; two species of *Cettia* (*C. canturiens* and *C. fortipes*) were calling incessantly ; there were flocks of Siskins (*Chrysomitris spinus*), Golden-wing Finches (*Chloris sinica*), Wedge-tailed Nutmeg-birds (*Munia acuticauda*), and Red-headed Suthoras (*Suthora suffusa*). *Phylloscopus proregulus*, one of the smallest of the Willow Warblers, had made its appearance. Among resident species, Blue Pies (*Urocissa sinensis*), Yellow-vented Bulbuls (*Pycnonotus xanthorhous*), Green Mountain Bulbuls (*Spizixus semitorques*), Red-headed Tits (*Acredula concinna*), Ilwameis (*Trochalopteron canorum*), and an occasional Scimitar-bill (*Pomatorhinus styani*) were noted ; other species there were which are found everywhere, too numerous to name."

A new Tunisian Lark.—In a recently issued number of the 'Journal für Ornithologie,' Dr. A. Koenig, in an article upon the "Avifauna of Tunis," describes and figures a new species of Lark under the name *Alaemon margaritæ* (op. cit. p. 228, tab. ii), apparently allied to *Certhilauda duponti*. A pair of this species were obtained by the describer in March 1887, in the neighbourhood of Gabes, in Southern Tunis.

Obituary. Mr. R. S. WRAY.—With great regret we have to record the death, at the early age of twenty-four, of a Biologist of great promise, Mr. RICHARD SPALDING WRAY, B.Sc., Lond. The son of the Rev. William Wray, a Nonconforming minister in Yorkshire, he early developed a strong taste for natural-history pursuits, which led him to become a student at the Normal School of Science at

South Kensington, where he eagerly followed the teachings of Prof. Huxley and Mr. Howes. When, at the close of the year 1884, Prof. Flower was seeking some one to assist him in the formation of an elementary series of biological preparations to be placed in the great hall of the National Museum of Natural History, as an introduction to the study of the subjects more fully developed in the special galleries, he became acquainted with Mr. Wray, who entered with enthusiasm into the project, and soon showed that he possessed every natural capacity requisite for such a work. A neat-handed, skilful dissector, a good mechanic, an excellent draftsman, he displayed great taste and ingenuity in carrying out and even, it is said, improving upon the suggestions made to him by the Director. While he was engaged in the formation of a series of preparations to illustrate the arrangement of the bones and feathers of the wings of birds, the very insufficient state of the knowledge upon the subject, as recorded in ornithological works, became apparent, and Mr. Wray made some valuable original observations, which were embodied in a paper "On some Points in the Morphology of the Wings of Birds," published in the 'Proceedings' of the Zoological Society for 1887. This and two minor papers on kindred subjects* were all that he was able to communicate to the world; for, unhappily, his powers were greatly diminished by long-continued ill-health, and finally gave way to pulmonary phthisis, to which he succumbed on the 12th of February last. He has, however, left a lasting memorial of his patience, ability, and knowledge in the preparations which enrich the Museum; and his simple, modest, unaffected character, and the genuine earnestness with which he entered into the performance of every duty, will not be easily forgotten by those who had the pleasure and advantage of being in any way associated with him.

* These are :—(1) "On the Structure of the Barbs, Barbules, and Barbicels of a Typical Pennaceous Feather," *Ibis*, 1887, p. 420; (2) "Note on a Vestigial Structure in the Adult Ostrich representing the Distal Phalanges of Digit III.," *P. Z. S.* 1887, p. 283.